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mean that Social Democrats (*i.e.* the Party) will not combat and agitate against the pernicious institutions of nations, and against the inexpedient demands of nations. On the contrary it is the duty of the Party to conduct such agitation and to endeavour to influence the will of nations so that they may arrange their affairs in the way which will best suit the interests of the proletariat.[1]

It is not the national but the agrarian question that will decide the fate of progress in Russia. The national question is a subordinate question.[2]

Proletarian in content and national in form — such is the universal human culture towards which socialism is marching.[3]

I am referring to the deviation towards local native nationalism which is at times to be observed in the ranks of native Communists and which in the East expresses itself in Pan-Islamism and Pan Turkism.[4]

Here then is the Doctrine of the Proletariat, overriding the right of self-determination, and applied to 'native nationalists', who *ex hypothesi* have no proletariat of their own, by a Russian proletariat working through the Party. Leaving aside the instruments of enforcement lurking at every corner, it is hard to think of a series of pronouncements which could be more discouraging to a Central Asian patriot, or less in tune with the proud declaration of the liberty of the colonial peoples to decide on their own future.

THE PARTY

The period from 1918 to 1929 was spent in the integration of these colonial areas with Great Russia, using as instrument the Party. Collectivization had not yet been launched; up to 1929 the aim was to cut off the smaller landholders from their national leaders. Here again it is to be remembered that the Russian peasantry in the countryside and the Russian proletariat on the communications and in the towns were ready to hand to implement a policy. Whatever the theory, the Party has always been in fact a single unified structure bound by the tightest possible discipline. To parody Stalin,

[1] Stalin, *op. cit.* p. 53. [2] Stalin, *op. cit.* p. 25. [3] Stalin, *op. cit.* p. 110.
[4] Stalin, report to Communist Party, 10th Mar. 1921, *op. cit.* p. 104.

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many years the Tsars had been toying with the idea of sweeping all this aside, but so strong was local sentiment that they had failed to act. But by a decree of May 1924 the Soviets vested all control of distribution of water in the State. And they applied it ruthlessly. The result was to remove settlement of disputes from the tribal authority near at hand, substituting an impersonal officialdom, and at the same time to enable authority at the desired moment to decree without gainsaying the kind of crop which should be sown and the arbitrary price for which it would be taken up. The reform also served the purpose of shifting the weight of economic and political power from the people to the Party. It was easier to carry out in the areas of intensive cultivation where farmers were tied to the land and must have water or starve, and where a redistribution by means of robbing Peter to pay Paul had at least some chance of pleasing Paul. But even here there was a fierce struggle between the Party and the traditional leaders who were often loved and trusted by the people and understood their minds. These leaders were at first able to prevail over the Party men in local elections, and the latter had to resort to confiscation of crops, hay and cattle, and even to expulsion of big landowners, before they could prevail.

On the steppe it was much more difficult to carry through the process, for the nomads were seldom tied to definite holdings, and the tribal allegiance to the chieftain was in the patriarchal tradition. John Littlepage,[1] the American mining engineer, who spent the ten years from 1928 in the midst of this country, has described with obvious sincerity exactly what he saw of conditions before the Second Russian Revolution of 1929 (as he calls it) and after it. In 1928, before collectivization, tribal life on the steppe was scarcely touched. Meat and food were plentiful and the tribes came and went with their herds as they had been used to do. But the Kremlin had already announced that the nomad's life was demoralizing and must be broken up. And that meant the destruction of the old tribal organization, and the conversion of the tribes,

[1] Bib. I, 62.

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to threaten Russian predominance and weaken the links between the central power and each of the five Central Asiatic Republics. The Soviet central Government has, therefore, strongly opposed all federative tendencies. Organizations which originally dealt with Central Asia as a whole, such as the Central Asiatic Bureau of the All-Union Communist Party and the Central Asiatic Economic Council were disbanded in 1934. The Soviet Government alleged that the liquidation of these bodies constituted a recognition of the growing maturity of the various Central Asiatic Soviet Republics. In reality this measure was dictated by the desire of the Soviet Government to eliminate anything which might serve as a lever for the formation of a regional alliance of non-Russians against the centre.*

Even now there is but comparatively little contact between the members of the Central Asiatic cultural élite such as writers, folklorists and historians, despite the existence of many problems which could be satisfactorily solved by mutual co-operation. In the majority of cases, the only kind of co-operation existing between them operates on the all-Union level, i.e. in a wider framework alongside Ukrainians, Russians, Georgians, Armenians, etc. Thus, for instance, no special conferences of Central Asiatic writers and historians are held, a fact which was regretfully admitted by the Uzbek writer Aibek at the Eleventh Plenum of the Soviet Writers' Union.[5]

The lack of co-operation and co-ordination leads to the isolation of the literature and culture of the various Central Asiatic peoples of the U.S.S.R. The artificial process of separating the national histories of the various Central Asiatic peoples from each other has favoured narrow-minded local nationalism and a certain anarchy in the field of history writing. Textbooks produced for Kazakhstan and Kirghizistan and for Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan conflict with each other in a number of cases.

THE RUSSIANS AS 'ELDER BROTHER'

The idea which the Soviet régime wishes permanently to implant in Central Asia is that the links between each of the non-Russian peoples and the Russians should be closer than those of the non-Russian peoples among themselves. Moscow wants the Uzbeks, the Tadzhiks, Kazakhs, Turkmenians and Kirghiz to realize that one and all of these peoples owe a great deal of gratitude to the great Russian brother while they owe hardly anything to each other. Every Soviet official in Central Asia must

* At the time of the disbandment of the Central Asiatic Bureau the total number of organized communists in Uzbekistan (including Karakalpakia), Turkmenistan and Tadzhikistan amounted to 79,150. In Tadzhikistan and Turkmenistan half of the party membership consisted of Europeans, in Karakalpakia as much as 70 per cent. Only in Uzbekistan were 'native' communists in the majority.[4]